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PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION MEMORANDUM



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POSSIBLE OIL DRILLING OPERATION IN NORTH VIETNAM

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GROUP 1 EXCLUDED FROM
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POSSIBLE OIL DRILLING OPERATION
IN NORTH VIETNAM

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A possible exploratory oil drilling operation first observed in North Vietnam in [REDACTED] has again been observed on low-level photography of [REDACTED] 4.1 nautical miles (nm) southeast of Thai Binh and 33 nm southwest of Haiphong. The large drilling rig (Figure 1) has a large lean-to shed attached to the west side, which may house a generator. A probable mud pipe extends from the rig to an adjacent mud pond.

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Large stacks of piping, normally associated with oil drilling, are not in evidence at the site. On the [REDACTED] coverage, a few lengths of possible pipe are standing upright within the framework of the rig, and on the later photography at least seven pipe sections are lying on the ground in front of the rig. Latest coverage of the facility indicates that several buildings have been removed and some of the previously observed small structures in the area have been repaired.

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The operation may be in search of crude oil deposits in the Tonkin Delta area, although no refining capability is known to exist in North Vietnam. A small portable drilling rig, observed in Haiphong on photography of [REDACTED] could have been used in obtaining core samples or in actual drilling for oil or gas. Figure 2 is an exploratory oil drilling rig in the Tuymazy-Oktyabrsk oilfields, USSR* and is similar in appearance to the drilling rig observed in North Vietnam.

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[REDACTED] The Petroleum Industry of the Soviet Union, 1961 (U)

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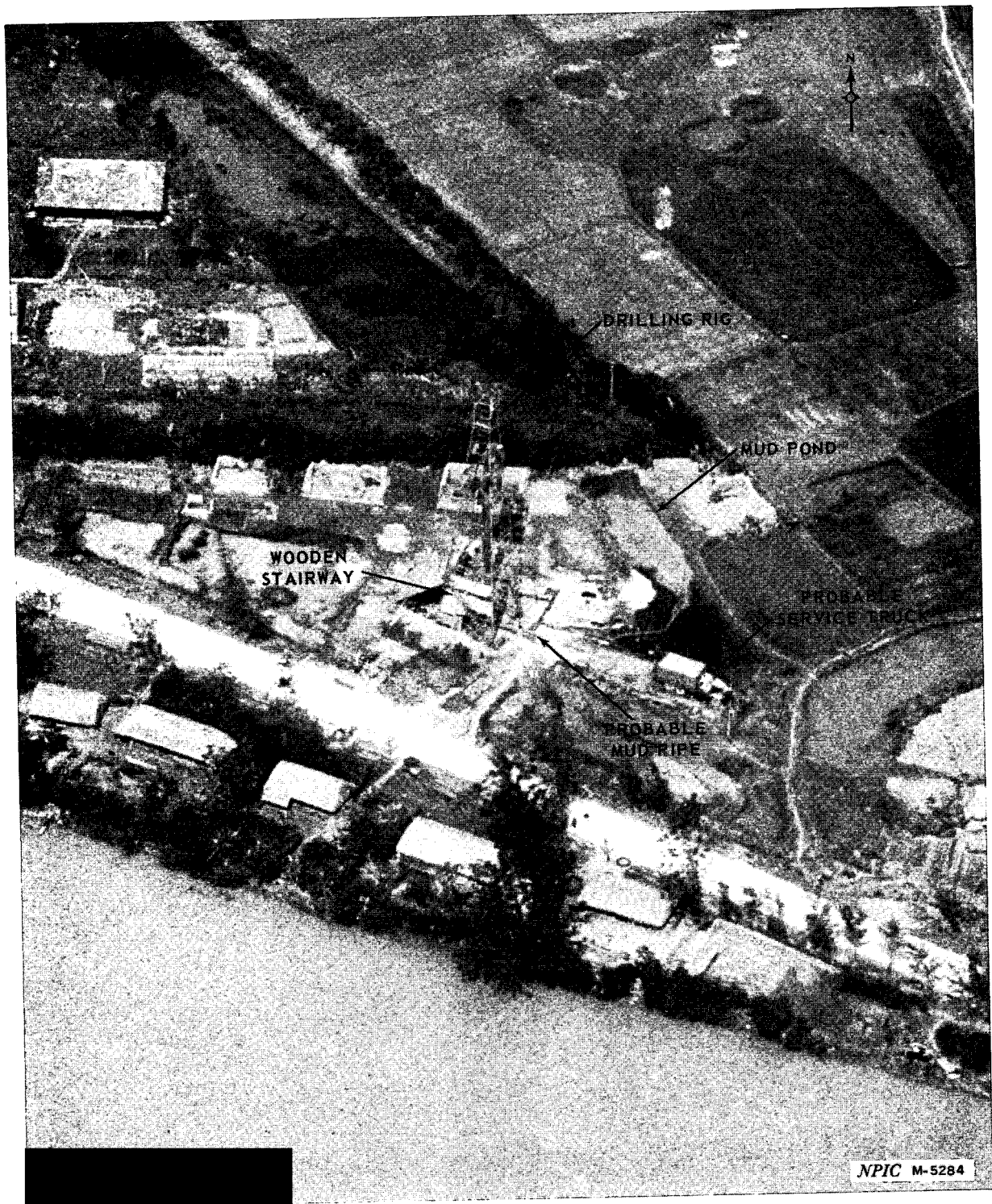


FIGURE 1. DRILLING SITE, THAI BINH AREA, NORTH VIETNAM.

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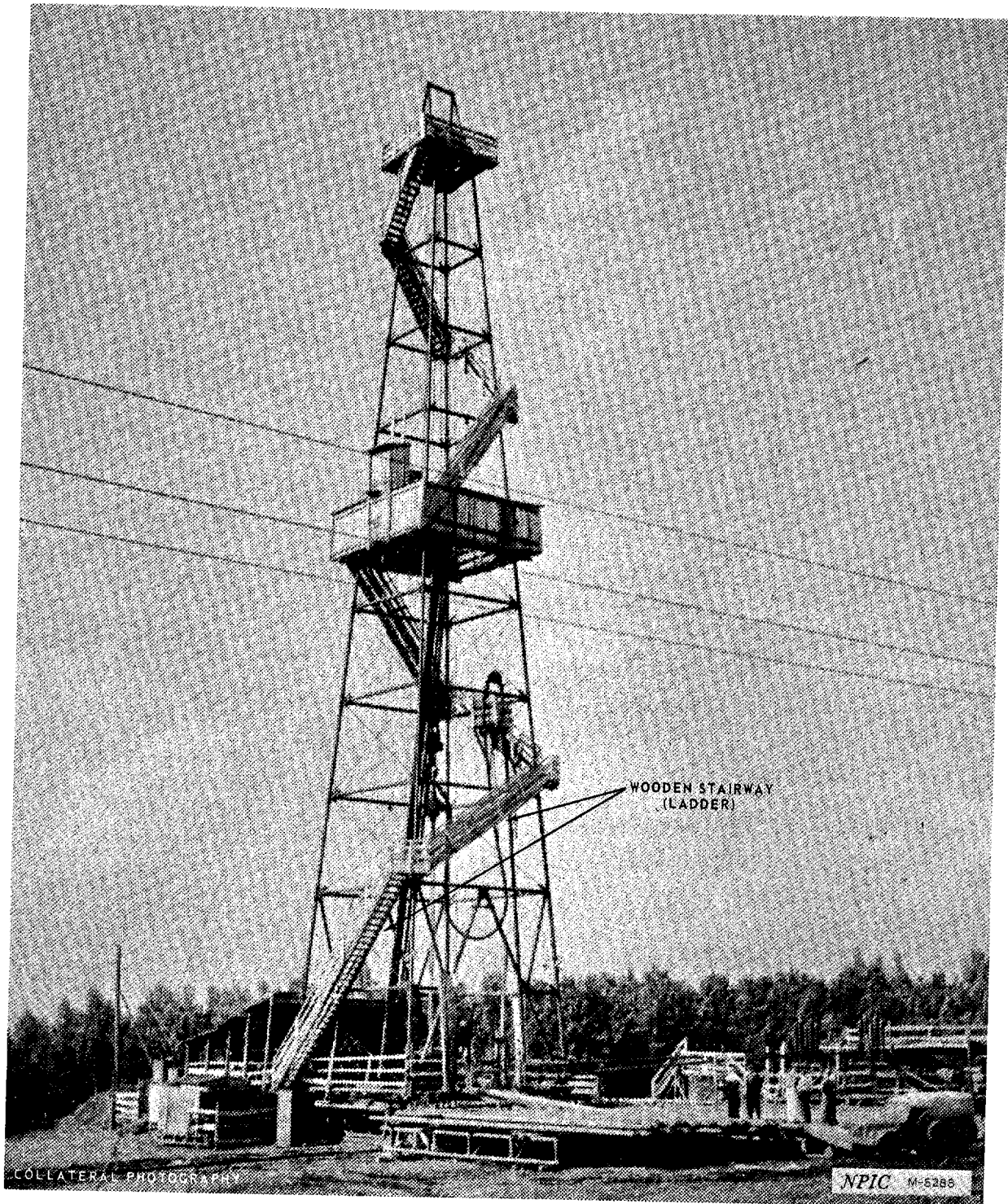


FIGURE 2. EXPLORATORY OIL DRILLING RIG, TUYMAZY-OKTYABRSK OILFIELDS, USSR.

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